

PARISH OF PETTAUGH

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting for the Parish of Pettaugh held on 7 May 2025 at St Catherine’s Church, Pettaugh (start 6.00pm)

Present: Councillor S Rowe (Chairman of the Parish Council - presiding)
Parish Councillors B Bulsing, R Jack, M Marlow and E Thornton
Councillor M Hicks (County Councillor), Councillor N Hardingham
(District Councillor)
S Jennings (Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting – 7 May 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 7 May 2024 be approved and confirmed.

3. Reports by Councillors and other representatives

Councillor M Hicks, the County Councillor, gave a verbal summary of his report which would be provided, and including the following topics –

- The County Council’s approved budget of £803m – a high proportion continuing to be focused on protecting the most vulnerable children and adults. There had been no cuts to front-line services.
- Devolution and Local Government Re-organisation – election of a Mayor in May next year for the combined authority of Norfolk and Suffolk – to take on strategic devolved functions. In parallel, proposals for reorganization involving the creation of new unitary authorities with final business case submissions to the Government by September. Final decision anticipated around the end of the year.
- Libraries had been brought back in-house, now known as Suiffolk Community Libraries.
- Energy infrastructure- National Grid pressing ahead with the plans to install new pylons on a route from Norwich to Tilbury and seemingly inflexible as to other options. Some discussion took place regarding solar farms.

Councillor Hicks then responded to questions and reported that the Highways contractors Milestone seemed to be performing well. He also mentioned the demographics of the County and said that demand for school places was falling. He confirmed that he still had a Locality Budget should the Parish Council require assistance.

Councillor Hicks was thanked for this contribution and left the meeting.

Councillor N Hardingham, the District Councillor, then presented his annual report, which had been circulated, covering the following topics:

- New devolution and local government reform affecting Mid Suffolk. The District Council had different information from that provided by the County Council regarding the disaggregation of certain County services. Mid Suffolk's likely preference was for two or three new unitary authorities. The new unitary elections were likely in 2027 with a shadow authority operating for a year.
- The Council's Budget – the Council had good reserves and was investing well to improve lives.
- Thriving towns and villages – two new community transport routes launched
- Environmental sustainability – Cosy Homes scheme to assist with energy efficiency and sustainability in private homes. It was suggested that an information leaflet could be placed on the Parish noticeboard.
- Planning and Housing – Approved Joint Local Plan to be reviewed in the light of new national housebuilding targets.
- Supporting the community – funding for local events and community groups from the Community Infrastructure Levy. The locality budget availability to each District Councillor had been increased.

There was some discussion around solar farms, it being noted that the District Council took a different perspective from that of the County Council. A proposal by Ipswich Borough Council to be at the heart of one of two unitary authorities would mean that Councillors would have larger areas of representation and significantly increased casework. The loss of locality and local accountability was regretted. He then updated the meeting on matters relating to land at the Crowfield Rose and at Stonham Barns.

Councillor Hardingham was thanked for his regular interest and informative reports and then left the meeting.

A report on behalf of the Metcalf Educational Foundation had been circulated by Councillor Ruth Crane. Although she represented the Parish on the Trust Board, there was no requirement for the Parish Council specifically to appoint her as a Trustee. She confirmed that no grants had been given in the last year and mentioned that a well-being group had been established at Stonham Aspal Village Hall.

An annual report on behalf of the Parish Council had been prepared by the Clerk and was approved for publication.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.15pm.

Draft minutes only – pending confirmation at the next Annual Parish Meeting

CHAIRMAN